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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Efficient Democracy.* By WM. H. ALLEN, PH.D. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1907. Pp. xiv+346, and 14 illustrations. \$1.50.

In sixteen very suggestive chapters Dr. Allen here gives us a study of the statistical method as a foundation for intelligent advance in the business of the school and various other social lines. The keynote is struck in the second sentence of the preface, where the stand is taken that, "To be efficient is more difficult than to be good." And a little later, "To test the goodness of a citizen, trustee, or public official requires more than human judgment. Efficiency can, and should be tested by those who benefit when it is present, and suffer when it is lacking."

The first chapter is a challenge. Here are the first words: "Good men will administer well. This is the Goodness Fallacy that hampers civic progress, and weakens church, charity, hospital, and school. Like many other fallacies it is attractive, because of its promise and its flattery. . . . Convinced that Good Government, in whatever field, will never be possible so long as goodness is to be the sole, or even the chief, qualification of public officers, it is proposed to substitute an Efficiency Test for the Goodness Test."

This is the programme of the book. The Goodness Fallacy is exhibited in half a hundred ways. Outside of reform politics and so-called uplift work we are interested in goodness only as it has a bearing on efficiency. "We ask much more of a companion for an evening or for life. Our photographer must know how to take pictures; . . . we do not forgive a blundering dentist because he is of irreproachable character." The modern Diogenes "looks for efficiency, and expects goodness to be thrown in. He imposes a merit test, and that test is based upon visible, countable results. . . . In schools too, as a rule, goodness has given way to efficiency as the avowed test for teacher and janitor, but not for school trustee. Neither the last named, nor those who select him realize as yet that there is just as definite a measure of a trustee's fitness to direct, as of a teacher's fitness to teach. . . . Goodness has not in the past prevented egregious waste in school management nor has it analyzed school experience so as to prevent the neglect of needy children, the ruthless waste of child life, and the continuance of errors for decade after decade. The school text-book trade has been promoted in country as well as city by methods that in deception, favoritism, shamelessness, vaunted altruism, and number contaminated, surpass the possibilities in any business not supervised by goodness."

This is the temper of the book. Straightforward, forcible, clear, and scintillating with wit, it must be understood; it is educative in the highest sense. We are blundering in the dark everywhere in our municipal activities, our schools, our charities, our treatment of crime, and all because we have not brought our wit to bear upon the accumulation of facts, which, by classification, and comparison, may be made to show us our shortcomings, and how they may be

corrected. The antipathy which some of us have for "statistics" is explained, and we are shown what may be done with the right facts, rightly classified and compared. In fact the chapter on "The Simple Ingredients of the Statistical Remedy" gives us so luminous an exposition of the purpose and method of statistics that any prejudice we may have against statistics must disappear.

The chapter on "School Efficiency" gives us a brilliant exposition of what we are losing in all our schools by the lack of a proper method of record, and use of the record as a means of correcting errors and directing our growth in right lines. "Any educational policy that must forever be supported by belief, not fact, is either too expensive a luxury for a democracy to indulge in or too insignificant to worry about. Any policy that the best theory justifies, facts will also justify, and figures describe, classify, count, compare, and summarize." An inspiring story is told of what has already been accomplished in New York City, for the school children and for the schools, by the Committee on Physical Welfare of School Children, a handful of earnest people, "who have desired to know certain countable, measurable facts." It is an object-lesson for all the country. For, "It is true of our American schools, that an adequate system of bookkeeping and records would disclose waste in construction of buildings, in supplies, in service, in children's time, in opportunity, vastly exceeding the expenditure necessary for bringing to light such waste."

Dr. Allen carries this keen specific analysis through the discussion of charitable work, the prevention of crime, religious work, and government, giving in many cases an exact form of inquiry and record, showing how the form of record may be made to give the maximum of information with the minimum of effort in entry. He then outlines a Municipal Bureau of Statistics, showing how such an institution, if endowed and independent, and properly manned with experts, could be a power of the greatest significance in organizing the municipal record in all the lines he has discussed, and in others; and how such record may be presented to all the people in such a way as to turn on a veritable search-light in all lines of municipal activity, so pointing out the weak places, giving a chance to eliminate wastes, correct errors, and finally to arrive at efficiency.

It is good to know that his appeal has borne fruit. That an endowment is already subscribed for such a bureau in New York City, and that Dr. Allen is chosen as its first secretary. We may look with confidence to this bureau for some of the most stimulating work in the matter of the management of the school budget and of school organization and management. A copy of this book ought to find its way into the hands of every school board in the land.

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*Physiography.* By ROLLIN D. SALISBURY. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1907. Pp. xx+770. Maps and illustrations. \$3.50.

Teachers of physiography will welcome this new book, not only on account of the large amount of fresh material and the fine illustrations that it contains, but also because it represents the accumulated experience and the method of a scientist whose skill as a teacher is well known and widely appreciated.